

of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which spread radiation over much of northern Europe.

In all, 7 million people in the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine are estimated to suffer physical or psychological effects of radiation related to the April 26, 1986, catastrophe, when reactor No. 4 exploded and caught fire.

An area half the size of Italy was contaminated, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to be resettled and ruining some of Europe's most fertile agricultural land, the United Nations said.

Hundreds of Ukrainians filled the small Chernobyl victims' chapel in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, at 1:23 a.m. Monday (6:23 p.m. Sunday ET), the exact time of the explosion. Later, they laid flowers and lit candles at a small hill where marble plates are inscribed with the names of hundreds of victims.

Nearly 1,000 mourners gathered Monday afternoon at Kiev's memorial to Chernobyl victims, a soaring statue of five falling metallic swans. Some placed flowers and photos of deceased relatives at its base.

"Nothing can be compared with a mother's sorrow," said Praskoviya Nezhlyvova, an elderly retiree clutching a black-framed photograph of her son, Viktor. She said he died of Chernobyl-related stomach cancer in 1990 at age 44.

Volodymyr Diunych, a driver who took members of the hastily recruited and inadequately equipped cleanup crews to the site, recalled watching as residents were evacuated "in an awful rush" days after the disaster. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's traditional May Day celebrations went ahead in Kiev, 80 miles south of Chernobyl, only five days after the accident.

Soviet authorities had withheld much information on the world's worst nuclear accident, both from its own people and from the rest of the world. Only last year, Ukraine's security service declassified secret files documenting malfunctions and safety violations at the plant that caused the release of small doses of radiation from time to time long before the explosion.

Ukraine shuttered Chernobyl's last working reactor in December 2000, but many problems remain.

Ukrainian experts say that the concrete-and-steel shelter that was hastily constructed over the damaged reactor needs urgent repairs, but authorities claim that there are no serious safety threats. Meanwhile, many people injured or displaced because of the explosion complain about inadequate government support.

Sergei Shchvetsov, the head of Russia's Chernobyl Union, said that 40,000 people disabled in operations to clean up the blast live in Russia and the "volume of benefits to which (they) are eligible is narrowing every year," the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Greenpeace activists held a small protest outside Russia's Department for the Inspection of Radiation Security, carrying signs that read "No more Chernobyls."

Meanwhile, in the Ukrainian town of Slavutych—built to house Chernobyl workers displaced by the accident—people held a solemn memorial meeting early Monday to honor the memory of their relatives, friends and colleagues.

The accident occurred after officials put the reactor through a test in which power was reduced and some safety devices were disabled.

More than 2.32 million people have been hospitalized in Ukraine as of early 2004 with illnesses blamed on the disaster, including 452,000 children, according to Ukraine's Health Ministry. Ukraine has registered some 4,400 deaths.

The most frequently noted Chernobyl-related diseases include thyroid and blood can-

cer, mental disorders and cancerous growths. The United Nations said in a statement that in some areas of Belarus, thyroid cancer among children has increased more than 100-fold when compared with the period before the accident.

Two years ago, the U.N. reported that 200,000 people still live in highly contaminated areas and 4.5 million residents in three countries are receiving financial help—draining national budgets.

The explosion and fire at Chernobyl's No. 4 reactor contaminated 23 percent of Belarus, 5 percent of Ukraine and 1.5 percent of Russia, according to the report. It also spewed a radioactive cloud across Europe.

CONSIDERATION OF S. 1904, WILKIE D. FERGUSON, JR. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2004

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask that the following newspaper articles from the Miami Herald and the South Florida Sun-Sentinel appear in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD immediately following my statement:

[From the Miami Herald, April 29, 2004]

U.S. HOUSE OKS BILL NAMING NEW FEDERAL COURTHOUSE FOR LATE JUDGE WILKIE FERGUSON

(By Larry Lebowitz)

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday unanimously passed a bill that would name the new federal courthouse in downtown Miami after the late U.S. District Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. and sent it to the President for his signature.

"His career is an inspiration to hundreds of young attorneys, and his honor and integrity make him a symbol of fairness on the federal bench," said Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Miami. "... Naming the new federal courthouse after Judge Ferguson is an honor that will reinforce his legacy for decades to come." Only seven U.S. courthouses nationwide have been named for black jurists, none of them in Florida. The Senate version, introduced and co-sponsored by Florida Democratic Sens. Bob Graham and Bill Nelson, passed on March 12.

The \$163 million courthouse, which will feature two 14-story towers connected by a mammoth atrium, is located at 400 N. Miami Ave. It is slated to open in late summer 2005.

[From the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Apr. 29, 2004]

MIAMI FEDERAL COURT BUILDING TO BE FIRST IN STATE NAMED AFTER AFRICAN-AMERICAN
(By Ann W. O'Neill)

Congress unanimously approved legislation naming Miami's newest courthouse after the late U.S. District Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr., making it the first federal court building in Florida to bear the name of an African-American.

The bill, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Kendrick B. Meek, was approved Wednesday by a 406-0 vote.

"Now, that's consensus," Meek said of the unanimous roll call vote. "People in South Florida seeking justice can see an example of a man who stood tall."

Meek, D-Miami, and other backers said naming the building after Ferguson shows how South Florida has evolved from a segregated society where, a generation ago, some courthouses housed blacks and whites in separate holding cells.

The \$137 million Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. United States Courthouse, going up at 400 N. Miami Ave., will be completed next year. Only seven federal courthouses across the country are named after African-Americans.

Ferguson, who was 65 when he died last year of leukemia, earned a reputation as an even-handed jurist who championed the underdog. His friend, Miami civil rights attorney H.T. Smith, eulogized Ferguson as "the judge for the least, the last, the lost, the looked-over and the left out."

In his most resonant federal court ruling, Ferguson was credited with improving the lives of thousands of disabled Florida residents. In 1999, he held the state in contempt of court, forcing it to increase funding for home nursing care and other services. The move allowed thousands of disabled people to live at home rather than in institutions.

Ferguson was born in May 1938 in Miami, where his father, Wilkie Sr., was founding pastor of St. Andrew's Missionary Baptist Church in Opa-locka. The elder Ferguson died last year at age 94.

His first landmark case came as a Miami-Dade Circuit Court judge, when he ruled blacks had been systematically excluded from a jury. He served on the state's Third District Court of Appeal in Miami from 1980 to 1993, when President Clinton appointed him to the federal bench.

Ferguson heard most of his cases in Fort Lauderdale.

The new courthouse bearing his name is taking shape as one of the most architecturally distinctive buildings to appear on Miami's skyline in years. It consists of two 15-story glass towers connected by an atrium. When completed and landscaped, it will resemble a ship afloat on a wavy sea of grass.

The bill was backed by 19 South Florida Congress members; U.S. Sens. Bob Graham and Bill Nelson; the Dade County Bar Association; the former Black Lawyers Association, now known as the Wilkie D. Ferguson Bar Association; the Caribbean Bar Association; the Haitian Lawyers Association; the Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners and the city of Miami.

TRIBUTE TO DR. TOMAS A. ARCINIEGA ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2004

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Tomas A. Arciniega for his 20 years of distinguished service as the president of California State University-Bakersfield. His retirement in July 2004 concludes a remarkable career noted for his leadership in the development of CSU-Bakersfield as a major regional university. Throughout his career, Dr. Arciniega has been a tireless advocate for expanded access to higher education for low-income and minority students in California's San Joaquin Valley.

Dr. Arciniega was born and raised in El Paso, Texas and earned a bachelor's degree in teacher education from New Mexico State University and a master's degree in educational administration from the University of New Mexico. His early career included military service as an officer in the United States Army and an appointment by the United States Foreign Service as a human resources advisor in the Dominican Republic during the late 1960's.